



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

Contact: Kevin Kelly

Phone: (573) 751-9300

Governor Office Building, Suite 900

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PSC APPROVES AGREEMENT GRANTING SUSPENSION OF LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY IMPLEMENTATION FOR ALMA COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

Jefferson City (July 30, 2004)---The Missouri Public Service Commission has approved an agreement seeking a suspension of requirements for Alma Communications Company d/b/a Alma Telephone Company (Alma Telephone) to implement local number portability (LNP) in its service area. The agreement approved by the Commission grants a two-year suspension. The agreement also grants modifications regarding call rating and routing issues.

Alma Telephone sought the suspension because its facilities are not currently LNP-capable. The telephone company indicated that implementation of LNP would require it to incur substantial implementation costs and substantial ongoing costs that the telephone company may recover in accordance with FCC rules from its customers.

Parties to the agreement indicated that granting the suspension would benefit the company's customers by limiting LNP costs to one upgrade as opposed to an upgrade to the existing switch now and a switch replacement within two years.

Under LNP, a customer would be able to take his/her land line telephone number to another provider (such as wireless).

The agreement presented to the Commission sought the two-year suspension in order for Alma Telephone to avoid the imposition of a significant adverse economic impact on its subscribers and to avoid imposing an undue economic burden on the telephone company. The agreement also noted that the suspension would ensure that subscribers would not be forced to bear the costs for something from which they are unlikely to benefit.

The Commission stated that granting the suspension and modification is consistent with federal law in that "it is necessary to avoid a significant adverse economic impact on users of telecommunications services generally and to avoid imposing a requirement that is unduly economically burdensome".

The agreement approved by the Commission was submitted by Alma Telephone, the Office of the Public Counsel and the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission.

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